



---

Nebuchadnezzar King of Justice

Author(s): W. G. Lambert

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Iraq*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring, 1965), pp. 1-11

Published by: [British Institute for the Study of Iraq](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4199775>

Accessed: 23/02/2013 07:10

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



*British Institute for the Study of Iraq* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Iraq*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR KING OF JUSTICE

By W. G. LAMBERT

THE latest volume of cuneiform texts published by the British Museum contains one piece of exceptional interest as nothing exactly like it has been discovered before.<sup>1</sup> It is part of a tablet with three columns of writing on each side. The upper part of the tablet is missing, and since the Babylonians and Assyrians turned their tablets from top to bottom, and not from side to side, this means that the beginnings of the first three, and the ends of the last three columns are missing, which includes of course the beginning and end of the text. A substantial portion of each column is missing, though just how many lines are involved cannot be estimated. The left edge of the tablet is also missing, so much so that only the extreme right-hand ends of the lines are preserved in columns I and VI. While some disconnected words can be made out in these two columns, no sense results and they will not be referred to again. We have, then, three portions of the text left: parts of column II, columns III and IV (which are consecutive because they are on different sides of the tablet), and column V.

The first of these surviving sections begins as though it were prophecies of social disorder. Texts of this kind do indeed exist,<sup>2</sup> and up to line 21 no objection could be taken to this interpretation. The rich and powerful are to oppress the poor. The judges will pay no heed to justice and will not lecture the oppressors on the error of their ways. (A specimen of such sermonising is actually given in ll. 9-13.) However, suddenly in line 22 we are abruptly introduced to the opposite, both in tense and spirit: a king devoted to justice and burning midnight oil to write down a just code of laws for his land and regulations for his city and his own royal office. The change is so abrupt that one must assume textual corruption, and indeed at a number of points there are erasures, badly written signs, and passages which simply do not hang together. In the translation an asterisk indicates where the present writer at least finds no connexion between clauses and assumes corruption.

The last few lines of column II, which speak of the just king, are narrative, as is the remainder of the surviving lines. With this knowledge the first 21 lines of column II need re-assessing. It now appears that the ambiguity of the Akkadian tenses has given a wrong impression. The Akkadian present can be equivalent to the English futures, but it may also indicate habitual action,

<sup>1</sup> *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, Part XLVI, by W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, No. 45, London, 1965.

<sup>2</sup> See A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* XVIII, pp. 7-30.

whether in past or present. Thus the presents in ll. 1–21 are not future in sense, as one would naturally take them at the first reading, but describe the bad old days against which the model king is to be judged so much the better.

Who, then, is this king? Not a single personal name occurs in the surviving lines. The king must certainly be a king of Babylon in view of the gods mentioned in III 17, especially since Šamaš and Ištar are identified with Marduk and Šarpānitum. The language has one certainly Late Babylonian form: *lapān* (II 14), though otherwise it is the standard literary language of late Babylonia and Assyria, not the Late Babylonian dialect found in letters. While it is prose, it contains many phrases peculiar to poetry or elevated prose, and twice it offers the shortened form of the third person suffix, -š (IV 5, 17), which is a distinctive mark of affected style. The orthography is late: nominal and verbal endings are frequently wrong, and the 'āleph-sign is used at the end of third-weak verbs (II 10, 19, 20). However, such features can be found in late copies of early texts and in themselves are not proof of late composition. The most direct evidence for identifying the king occurs just as column V breaks off. The extent of the king's conquests are listed, and since Egypt is the first place given, only Nebuchadnezzar II and his immediate successors can be considered possibilities. Nebuchadnezzar was the first king of Babylon to rule Egypt, and this is given as the extreme southwestern limit of the empire. The following line (V 21) lists Ḫumê, Piriddu, and Lydia, as forming the northwestern limits of the empire. The first, and probably the second also, was in Cilicia. Pirindu is a better attested form of the second name. The heart of Lydia was of course far to the west of Cilicia, but its territory may well have bordered on Cilicia at this period.<sup>3</sup> It is known that Nebuchadnezzar controlled these areas. Presumably the following line 22 gives the northern and eastern boundaries. The first name could be restored [urum]ar-ḫa-ši. Marḫaši (also written Paraḫše) was an area north of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, probably in Luristan. The present writer has been unable to restore the other traces of lines 22 and 23. The loss of these lines apart from the one probable restoration is particularly unfortunate, as it would have given us the boundaries of the Late Babylonian empire in the East, which are hitherto unknown. A passage in a royal inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II lists places that he conquered,<sup>4</sup> but this too is badly damaged and gives no help. If Marḫaši is a correct restoration, then it proves that this area was in Babylonian and not Median hands, as might have been suspected. Since these places are given not just as imperial limits, but as conquests, no king other than Nebuchadnezzar really fits. He was the only great conqueror of his dynasty to reach Egypt, and though Neriglissar campaigned in Cilicia, this was only a reassertion of previous holdings.

<sup>3</sup> On these places see: W. F. Albright, *BASOR* 120, pp. 22–25; A. L. Oppenheim, *ANET* p. 305, note 2; D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, pp. 39–40, 86–87.

<sup>4</sup> S. Langdon, *ZA* 19 146 = *VAB* IV 146 II.

The first 19 lines of column V confirm the correctness of this identification of the king. They deal with the lavish provision of daily offerings for the gods. Nebuchadnezzar's own inscriptions, in particular those from the Wadi Brissa,<sup>5</sup> contain a similar account in the first person with many coincidences of wording. Individual phrases occurring in similar contexts have no significance in view of the Babylonians' ready use of clichés. The banqueting of the gods at a mortal's (usually a king's) expense had been a *topos* of literature from at least the Cassite Period onwards, and particular items from the menu were quite standard. Other than the Wadi Brissa inscriptions a passage in the royal annals of Sargon II of Assyria offers the closest parallel: his offerings to the Assyrian gods consisted of "paunchy bullocks, fat sheep, chickens, ducks, dormice, [strings of] fishes [and] birds, the abundance of the Apsû, which could not be diminished, fine quality beer, honey, the product of the pure mountains that my hands had conquered."<sup>6</sup> The similarity of the menu is to be expected, but not only in this respect is the Wadi Brissa text closer to our inscription, but in general descriptions of the whole, such as "the best he had" (*rēš mimmešu*), there is identity of wording. Taken together, the coincidences between our text and Wadi Brissa are too many to be explained simply as borrowing from a common stock of clichés. A further one occurs in lines 23–4 of column V, the phrase restored as "king of [distant] regions". This also occurs in Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions,<sup>7</sup> but the very word "region" (*nagû*) occurs in the inscriptions of no other Late Babylonian king.

The greater part of the text, columns II–IV, is devoted to extolling the virtues of the king as lawgiver and judge. If our identification is correct, Nebuchadnezzar must be considered a second Hammurabi. Not only is a code of laws ascribed to him in II 23–27, but also regulations for his city, Babylon, and his own royal office. While admittedly no certain piece of any such documents has been recovered, this could easily be an accident of discovery. There is no adequate reason to doubt what the text says. Columns III–IV give picturesque examples of how justice was enforced. In the first preserved case (III 3–14) a criminal had the misfortune to be dragged a second time to the newly rebuilt courthouse. Second chances were not the order of the day. He was promptly beheaded, and his chopped-off head was sent through the land as a warning to would-be offenders. Also a replica of the head with suitable inscription was fixed as an adornment to the outside gate of the courthouse.

The second preserved case of this Solomon's wisdom is even more interesting. The crime was an unsubstantiated charge of murder considered as slander. The wording used (III 21) has some correspondence with that of Hammurabi's first law.

If a man accuses another man and charges him with murder,  
but does not prove it, his accuser shall be put to death.

<sup>5</sup> *VAB* IV pp. 154 and 158–159.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. H. Winckler, ll. 432–433 = Atlas pl. 24, no. 51.

<sup>7</sup> *VAB* IV pp. 206 17 and 146–8 2 and 5.

Hammurabi redivivus in contrast has both accuser and accused sent to the river ordeal. This procedure is prescribed in Hammurabi's second law, which involves a similar charge of sorcery. Now follows the most detailed and vivid account of a river ordeal from ancient Mesopotamia. It appears that, at least in this period, a special place had to be used, since the two persons were sent under guard to a spot on the Euphrates upstream from Sippar. Dawn is specified as the time for the act to be performed. Unfortunately column IV 1-5 are partly broken and not fully intelligible, so that the details of the actual jumping in are obscured. But the text does finally settle the controversy as to which judgment sinking or floating implied. The guilty party sinks.

It appears that a third case begins in IV 24-5, in which a man has acted contrary to his oath, which he took in the name of a god. The column breaks off before the outcome is given.

The distinctive character of the text can be defined in this way. Long before the time of Nebuchadnezzar II royal inscriptions had extolled the virtues of the reigning monarch, and quite often it is said that the king was appointed by the gods to uphold justice in the land. There is nothing distinctive in this theme at all. Literary texts not in the form of royal inscriptions which give accounts of the king's achievements were also established genres long before Nebuchadnezzar's day. The Assyrian *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* tells how a perjuring Cassite king was finally made to pay for his sins through the military action of the Assyrian king. Similar epics were composed at about the same period in Babylon, though little of them remains and still less is published. Both royal inscriptions and the historical epics from the second half of the second millennium are heroic in tone. Lofty words are matched by lofty deeds. Anything down-to-earth and vulgar is kept out. But here, in praise of Nebuchadnezzar II, we find a writer with an almost journalistic eye for what will appeal to human instincts less than the most noble. He expatiates on gory details of chopped-off heads and bleeding bodies, and lets us hear the *ipsissima verba* of the judge rebuking racketeers. Here is all formality stripped away and the cult of realism is embraced. The author is in the same line as Petronius and other anticipators of the modern novel. Yet all this was done in praise of the ruling king, or at least so it would seem. This is a unique document giving a glimpse of the spiritual revival which accompanied the final burst of Babylonian glory before it sank in the sea of Hellenism.

#### BM 45690

#### Obverse Column II

1. (traces)
2. *ʾpurussâ-ši-na là iparras<sup>as</sup>1 ki-ma kalbi ikkalu(kúmeš) a-ḫa-meš*
3. *dan-nu en-šú i-ḫab-bil a-na di-i-nu la ma-ši ma-la-a-šú*
4. *šá-ru-ú šá dun-na-ma-a i-leq-qu mim-mu-ú-šú*

## Obverse Column II

5. *šakkanakku u rubû itti a-ku-ú u al-mat là izḡazḡu<sup>u</sup> ma-ḥar* <sup>10</sup>*dayyāni*
6. <sup>10</sup>*dayyāna i-maḥ-ḥa-ra ul ip-pu-šú di-in-ši-in*
7. <sup>10</sup>*dayyānu ṭa-a-tú u kát-ra-a i-leq-qí-ma ul i-nam-di*
8. *elī-šú līt(ṭe)-su ul i-maḥ-ḥa-ru qí-bit-su*
9. *ʿkaspa šá<sup>1</sup> a-na ḥu-bul-lu ta-ad-di-na a-di ṣ-šú tu-uṣ-ši-pa*
10. *ʿtu-ub<sup>1</sup>-tap-pa-ʿ<sup>2</sup> bītātīmeš eqla u ugara tu-uṣ-ṣab-bi-tu*
11. *p[a]-ni u ku-tal-li tus-sip ni-šu-tu*
12. x [x] pi? ri x ti nam me šá a bušá(níg.šu) makkūra(níg.ga)
13. *ki-[i] kasap ḥu-bul-lu tag-mu-ru iz-ḡi-ba a-na [r]a-ma-ni-ku-un*
14. *amēlu mim-ma la i-ši-ma il-li-ku la-[p]a-ni-šú*
15. <sup>10</sup>*dayyānu purussā<sup>a</sup> iš-ku-nu tup-pu iš-ṭu-ru-ma ib-r[u]-um* <sup>2a</sup>*kunukka*
16. *tup-pi šú-a-tum i-nam-[d]i-ma là inamdin(sì)-šú* <sup>2a</sup>*<kunukka> illak<sup>ak</sup> arki-šú*
17. *na-piš-ta-šú i-sa-qa-am [aša]r illaku<sup>u</sup> la i-ši*
18. *i-nam-di ri-gim i-šak-kan š[i-s]i-it i-šak-kan bēl bēlē(en.en)*
19. x x x-a kasap ḥu-bul-lu e[l]i nišīmeš i-šá-ʿ
20. [(x)] x-šá-a ul ú-šá-aq-qa-ʿ<sup>2</sup> re-šá-a-ši-in
21. *ʿla<sup>1</sup> ib-ba-bal pa-ni-šú-nu-ma elī-šú-nu là inaddi līt(ṭe)-su*
22. *a-na di-ni<sup>8</sup> kit-tú u mi-šá-ri la ig-gi la is-ku-up mūša u ur-ri*
23. *di-i-nu u purussā<sup>a</sup> šá eli bēli rabī<sup>8</sup> amarduk ṭa-a-bi*
24. *a-na du-muq <kiš>-šat nišīmeš ú šu-šu-bu* <sup>kurakkadī<sup>ki</sup></sup> *šak-na*
25. *ina mil-ki u ši-tul-tu iš-ta-aṭ-ṭār-ma rik-sa-a-tú āli*
26. *a-na damiqtu(sig<sup>5</sup>-tú) ú-raḡ-ki-is bīt di-i-nu eš-šiš ib-nu*
27. *ú-ra-ak-ki-is rik-sa-a-ti NI šarru-u-ti-šú da-ru-ma*

## Obverse Column III

1. (traces)
2. *ḡa-ku-ú i-leq-qí e meš ur? x x [. . .*
3. *amēlu šá ina bīt di-nim šá-a-šú i-tu-ram-ma tup-pi x [. . .*
4. *rit-ku-su ri-ik-su iš-ni-ma a-na sur-ra-a-tú*
5. *u la ki-na-a-tum i-tu-ru a-na di-nim*
6. *šarru iqbi(e?) ana ummānāte<sup>bī.a</sup> qaqqad-su ikkisū-ma uš-ba-ʿ<sup>2</sup> u māta*
7. *qaqqad abni ikkisū<sup>u</sup> tam-šil qaqqad amēli šá-a-šú ṭpuš<sup>u</sup>-ma*
8. *amēlu šá di-in-šú di-nu tup-pi purussā<sup>a</sup>-šú šaṭ-ru-ma ba-ram-te tuppi*
9. *arki i ni ma i-tu-ra ana di-nim ki-ma šú-a-tú qaqqad-su innakkis<sup>is</sup>*
10. *e-li qaqqad amēli šá-a-šú ú-šá-áš-ṭir-ma*
11. *a-na nap-lu-su kiš-šat nišīmeš ina bābi kamī(<AN>.AŠ.ĀM)*
12. *šá bīt di-i-ni šá-a-šú ú-šá-áš-kin ana u<sub>4</sub>-mu ṣa-a-tú*

## Obverse Column III

13. *rag-gu u še-e-nu ip-pal-su-ma i-bu-ḡu šá-ḡa-tú*
14. *i-mi-id tu-ub-qa-tú ṭa-a-tú u kát-ra-a ina nišī<sup>meš</sup> iprusus-ma*
15. *lib-<sup>1</sup>bi<sup>1</sup> māti ú-ṭib-ba māta šubta(ki.dúr) ne-eḡ-tú ú-še-šib*
16. *mu-gal-li-tu a-a ú-šar- <ši>-ši-na-a-tú*
17. *lib-bi<sup>2</sup> asin(30) ašamaš u aštar(15) šá šú-nu-ma abēl abēlti(gašan)-iá anabú(nà)*
18. *a-šib é-sag-gíl u é-ḡi-da bēlē<sup>me</sup>-šú ú-ḡa-ad-di-ma*
19. *i-na palē-šú ki-i-nu u ra-<sup>2</sup>-im šarru-u-ti-šú*
20. *a-na sat-tuk-ku ú-sa-li-mu*
21. *amēlu eli amēli nir-tú id-di-ma la uk-ti-in*
22. *ma-ḡar-šú ib-bab-lu-nim-ma eliš(an.ta) sippari<sup>ki</sup>*
23. *kišād<sup>1</sup> apuratti ma-ḡar<sup>2</sup> a-šar ap-si-i*
24. *ú-ma-<sup>2</sup>-ir-šú-nu-ti a-na di-(ni<sup>6</sup>) kal mu-ši*
25. *ummānāt<sup>bi.a</sup> maššartu<sup>u</sup> ni-i-tú la-mu-šú-nu-ti ki-lal-la-an*
26. *i-šar-ra-pu išāta i-na še-rim i-na na-ma-ri*
27. *<sup>1a</sup>rubú šakkanakku u ummānātē<sup>bi.a</sup> ina qí-bit šarri paḡ-ru-ma*
28. *izḡizḡū<sup>u</sup>-ma elī-šú-nu*

## Reverse Column IV

1. *ki-lal-la-an ú-ri-du nāra i-x x [. . .]*
2. *a-šar apsi<sup>1</sup> na-ram šarru-ú-ti-šú a-na [. . .] x*
3. *<sup>1</sup>kit-tu<sup>1</sup> a-na nap-lu-su šá ul-tu ul-lu ina x [. . .]*
4. *[x x] x x (x) la iš-ši-ma-a ina uḡnē<sup>11</sup> ḡa-ku-<sup>1</sup>ú<sup>1</sup> [( . . .)]*
5. *[x x]-i-ti ú-šá-áš-la-áš-šum-ma šal-meš ut-ṭaḡ-ḡa-áš<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>-[na kib-ri]*
6. *<sup>1</sup>šá<sup>1</sup> elī-šú-nu tu-ru-ma ina mē<sup>meš</sup> ṭi-bi-ma ul-tu še-r[im]*
7. *adi mušlāli(an.izi) man-ma-an là iṭ-[ṭ]ú<sup>1</sup>-šú la še-ma-a ḡi-ki[r-šú]*
8. *ummānāt<sup>meš</sup> maššartu<sup>u</sup> šá ina idi anāri u[l-t]u šimētān(usan) adi na-ma-[ri]*
9. *elī-šú-nu iz-ḡi-ḡu ik-kud lib-bi-š[ú]-nu-ma iš-te-<sup>2</sup>-<sup>1</sup>ú<sup>1</sup> x x x*
10. *mi-i-nu ni-ta-ma-a ki-ki-ia ni-ip-pal bu ut lu? šarra*
11. *iš-me-e-ma šarru a-gu-ug lib-uš a-na ummānāt<sup>bi.a</sup> maššartu<sup>u</sup>*
12. *<sup>1a</sup>mār(a) šip-ri il-lak u i-tur-ru amēla la ip-ḡu-<sup>1</sup>ú<sup>1</sup>*
13. *e-bir-tu<sup>4</sup> nāri i-bir-ma i na x šēri-iš*
14. *šá ma-na-a ul-tu ul-lu là ippalis(igi.bar)-su la i-le-<sup>2</sup>-a a-pa-a-la*
15. *<sup>1a</sup>ri-<sup>1</sup>kib<sup>1</sup> ḡiš-ri sa-ag-bu i-ba-<sup>2</sup> nāra*
16. *e-bir-tum a-na e-bir-tum ḡi-iṭ-ṭu kib-ri*
17. *ina mušlāli(an.izi) ina ka-šá-du šá-lam-tu-uš ul-tu nāri i-lam-ma*
18. *mabīš<sup>1</sup> qaqqadu iš-tu pī uḡnē<sup>11</sup> u nap-pa-šú i-red-di damu (úš)*
19. *u muḡ-ḡi kīma ši-kin išāti-im-ma ḡa-mi-iṭ*



## Reverse Column IV

20. *ṣumur-šú ma-li bu-bu-tu*
21. *i-mu-ra-a niš<sup>meš</sup> i-ta-ma-a pu-ul-ḫa-a-tú*
22. *mātāti(kur.kur<sup>meš</sup>) ka-li-ši-na ra-šub-bat ṣa-a-na*
23. *a-a-bi lem-nu u ṣa-ma-nu pu-uṣ-rat i-ta-ḫaṣ*
24. *uš-taš-ni-ma arki amēlu eli amēli id-di tu x*
25. *nīš(mu) ḏšamaš iṣ-kur-ma ú-mēš giš-ḫur-ra*
26. *ḏ(x)-x be-lu rabū<sup>u</sup> šá šú-u ḏmarduk a-šib é-sag-gil*
27. (traces)

## Reverse Column V

1. *eš-šiš ib-ni ina gišsapārī<sup>meš</sup> sīsē<sup>meš</sup> dan-nu-tú*
2. *ú-šá-aš-mi-id pa-nu-tu šá a šá za a na x a-na tak-li-mu(! tablet: lú)*
3. *ilāni<sup>meš</sup> i-šab-bi-ma ú-šab-ma-tu itti-šú la ip-par-ku-u*
4. *ma-ḫar-šú u<sub>4</sub>-mi-šam la na-par-ka-a ina a-ka-l[a]*
5. *du-uš-šú-u ḏalpū<sup>meš</sup> dan-nu-ti udu<sup>1</sup>.nitá.niga.sig<sub>5</sub><sup>me</sup>[š] x x x x*
6. *kurke<sup>u</sup>mušen ḏpaspasumušen marratu<sup>1m</sup>[ušen tu.kur<sub>4</sub>muše]<sup>n</sup> ḏú<sup>1</sup>-šum-mu*
7. *i[s-ḫi] n[ūni<sup>meš</sup> in]bi kirī šur-ru-u[ḫ šu-mu-u]ḫ šip-pa-a-tú*
8. *giš[ḫašḫūru g]ištittu gišnurmū giškarānu! suluppu as-né-e*
9. *x-x-ib-tum mun-ṣi-qu ar-qu du-[u]š-šú-tu*
10. *[lalī] mu-sa-re-e billatu(kaš.ú.sa) damiqtu(sig<sub>5</sub>) ḏdišpu<sup>1</sup> hemētu(i.nun.na)*
11. *šamnu(1.giš) ḫal-ša šizbu reš-tu-u ulušinnu(kaš.ziz.àm)*
12. *du-uš-šu-pu šikaru rēštū(sag) aš-na-an*
13. *karān re-še-e-ti šadē<sup>me</sup> u mātāti(kur.kur<sup>me</sup>)*
14. *kāl(dù.a.bi)-ši-na re-eš mim-mé-e-šú*
15. *dam-qa ḫi-iš-bi šadī u ti. <am>at<sup>meš</sup> ul-tam-lil*
16. *ú-ṭaḫ-bi-id-ma ú-ṭaḫ-ḫa-a ma-ḫar ilāni<sup>meš</sup> rabūti<sup>meš</sup>*
17. *šá ul-tu u<sub>4</sub>-mu ṣa-a-tú man-ma-an ki-ma šú-a-tú ul īpušu(dù)<sup>š<sub>u</sub></sup>*
18. *ina qātē<sup>II</sup> -šú ellēti<sup>meš</sup> i-maḫ-ḫa-ri a-na da-r[i]š*
19. *ik-ta-nar-ra-bi šarru-ut-su a x x ud*
20. *[ina] ka-šá-a-du iš-tu kurmi-[š]ir a-[n]a/[d]i*
21. *[uruḫ]u-me-e urupi-rid-du urulu-ú-du*
22. *[x (x)] x ḫa ši a x [x] x x x x [s]a ki*
23. *[x x] x šu g[i . . . . . š]àr na-gi-i*
24. *[ne-su-ti]m x x [. . . . .] kur*
25. *. . .] x x x-ri-šú*
26. (traces)



## Obverse Column II

. . . (2) he would not take a decision concerning them. They used to devour one another like dogs. (3) The strong used to plunder the weak, who was not equal to a lawsuit. (4) The rich used to take the property of the poor. (5) Regent and prince would not take the part of the cripple and widow before the judge, (6) and if they came before the judge, he would not preside over their case. (7) If the judge took a bribe or present he would pay no attention (8) to it \* they would not receive his command, (9) "The silver which you have loaned on interest you have multiplied five times. (10) You have broken up houses, you have seized land and arable land. (11) In front and behind you have gathered members of families (12) . [ . ] . . . . . goods, property \* (13) When you have used up the interest-bearing silver \* will leave for yourselves." (14) If a man had nothing and went before him, (15) then the judge made a decision, wrote a tablet and rolled his seal (on it), (16) he would put down the tablet and not give it him. If he were to follow him (17) his life would be endangered and he would have nowhere to go, (18) he would give a cry, he would utter a shout, he would utter, "Lord of lords, (19) . . . . . take the interest-bearing silver from the peoples." (20) [ . ] . . . he used not to console them, (21) nor did he pardon them, nor pay attention to them \* (22) He was not negligent in the matter of true and righteous judgment, he did not rest night or day, (25) but with council and deliberation he persisted in writing down (23) judgments and decisions arranged to be pleasing to the great lord, Marduk, (24) and for the betterment of all the peoples and the settling of the land of Akkad. (26) He drew up improved regulations for the city, he built anew the law court. (27) He drew up regulations . his kingship for ever . . . .

## Obverse Column III and Reverse Column IV

. . . (2) the innocent used to take . . . . . [ . . . ] (3) The man who in that law court again . [ . . . ] a tablet, and (4) regulations were drawn up. Then a second time because of criminal (5) and unjust acts he came back for judgment. (6) The king commanded (?) the troops, they cut off his head and sent it through the land. (7) They (also) cut off a stone head, made it into the likeness of that man's head, (10) had (the following) inscribed on that man's head, (11-12) and fixed it on the outer gate of that law court for all mankind to see: (8) "A man whose case has been judged, the tablet of whose verdict has been written, and whose tablet has been sealed, (9) but afterwards he returns for judgment—in like manner shall his head be cut off." For the rest of time (13) evil and wicked men saw (this), went into hiding and (14) disappeared. He excluded bribes and presents from among the peoples, (15) he brought a sense of satisfaction to the land, settled the land in peace, (16) and allowed none to make them afraid. (17) He rejoiced the heart of Sin, Šamaš and Ištar, who are Bēl and Bēltiya, and Nabû, (18) who dwell in Esagil and Ezida, his

lords, and (19) in his just reign \* and who loves his kingship \* (20) for regular offerings they made benevolent \* (21) A man charged (another) man with murder, but did not prove it. (22) They were brought before him and he sent them upstream from Sippar (23) to the bank of the Euphrates to the presence of Ea, king of the Apsû, (24) for a judgment by night. (25) The troops of the guard, keeping both under close surveillance, (26) kept a fire burning. When dawn shone (27) prince, regent and troops, gathering as the king had commanded, (28) stood over them. (1) Both went down to the river . . . [. . .] (2) Ea, king of the Apsû, \* beloved of his kingship to [. . .] . (3) to behold justice, which, from time immemorial . . . [. . .] (4) [. . .] . . . had not been heard with the ears, the innocent [( . . .)] (5) [. . .] . . he made him jump in and safely brought him [to the bank]. (6) The one who had returned to them dived into the water and from dawn (7) to midday no one saw him, nor was [his] voice heard. (8) The troops of the guard, who had stood over them from evening to morning, (9) became worried and sought . . . (10) “What can we say? How can we answer . . . the king?” (11) The king heard and became angry with the troops of the guard. (12) A messenger went to and fro, but they did not . . . the man. (13) He crossed the ford of the river and moved (?) into the desert; (14) since no one had ever seen him, they could not answer. (15) The keeper (?) of the bridge and some scouts went along the river, (16) watching the banks from ford to ford. (17) When midday arrived his corpse came up from the river. (18) The head was bruised, and from the mouth, ears, and nostrils blood was flowing, (19) and the skull was hot like burning coals. (20) His body was covered with sores. (21) The peoples observed (this) and spoke in accents of fear: (22) all the lands were borne down with fear. (23) The enemy, the evil one, the foe went into hiding. (24) A second time, after a man charged (another) man . . . (25) he took the oath by Šamaš but despised the magic circle. (26) The god . . . , the great lord, who is Marduk who dwells in Esagil (27) . . .

#### Reverse Column V

. . . (1) he built anew. He yoked mighty horses in nets. (2) The leading ones . . . . . for an offering (3) to the gods he . . in good time, they did not fail him. (4) In his presence every day without fail among the food were (5) abundant mighty oxen, fat sheep . . . . (6) chicken, duck, *marratu*-birds, [pigeons], dormice, (7) strings of fishes, fruits of the orchard in large quantity, [the luxuriance] of the plantations, [apples], figs, pomegranates, grapes, dates, Tilmundates, (9) raisins, dried figs, abundant vegetables, (10) [the profusion] of the gardens, fine quality mixed beer, honey, butter, (11) refined oil, first quality milk, sweet *ulušinnu*-beer, (12) ‘first’ beer, grain, (13) wine, the best of the mountains and all lands, (14) the best that he had, (15) the pleasant luxuries of mountains and seas he gave to eat, (16) in abundance he offered it before the great gods. (17) What no one had done like this from time immemorial, (18) they received

from his pure hands for eternity, (19) and constantly blessed his kingship . . . . (20) [In] conquering from Egypt to (21) Ĥumê, Piriddu, Lydia, [. .] . . . . [. . . . .] (23) [. .] . . . [. . . . .] king of [distant] regions (24) . . .

### Philological Notes

- II 16. The restoration *zá<kunukka>* seems required as “stone” gives no particular sense in the context, but even better *ZÁ* could be omitted.
- II 20. For the different senses of *rēša šuqqû* see W. G. Lambert, *BWL* p. 300, note on IV 10.
- II 22. The last clause of this line is paralleled in *Enūma Eliš* I 130 etc.: *la sa-ki-pu mu-ša ù im-mu*. This new occurrence shows that *sakāpu/iskup* “sit” is to be distinguished from *sakāpu/iskip* “dispatch”, “throw down”. This can also be inferred from:
- KU<sup>ku</sup>.kuKU = MIN (*sa-ka-pu*) *šá ša-la-li*  
 Antagal A 206 (RA 13 191, Rev. II 13)
- This verb “sit” is comparatively rare, but *sak-pu* occurs as a variant to *ú-ši-bu* in *Enūma Eliš* I 33, and another lexical occurrence is *MSL* II 150 3 (cf. *ibid.* 127 30).
- III 3. It is assumed that *tāru* in this line is used as a subordinate verb, “to do again.”
- III 8. The grammar of *bar-ram-te tuppi* is not clear. If *tuppu* was taken as a feminine, then *baramte* might be considered late orthography for *barmat*.
- III 17. With *šá šú-nu-ma* cf. *šá šú-u* in IV 26. The line states quite clearly that Šamaš and Ištar are identified with Marduk and Sarpānitum. Such identifications are well known in theological texts, but unusual otherwise.
- IV 10. The ending on *kīkīya* may be compared with that on *a-na man-ni-ya* (Gilg. XI 293–4) and in the personal name *itti-man-ni-ya-abēl* (Pinches, *PSBA* 1896, pp. 250–258, 83–1–18, 1846 III).
- IV 13. A slight emendation gives *i-ta!-lak!*, for *ittalak*.
- IV 14. The translation assumes that *ma-na-a* is a corruption of *manman* or a variant form of the same pronoun.
- IV 15. The first term must indicate an official in charge of a bridge, since such a person could be expected to observe a human body floating down the river, but if *rikib* is correctly read, it is otherwise unknown. *sagbu/sagbû* occurs first in Mari texts (*ARM* XV 252; Edzard, *ZA* 56 146) and later in *Maliku* = *Šarru* I 58 (*JAOs* 83 425): *sag-bu-[u]* = *a-šá-re-du*.
- IV 18. *nap-pa-šú* might be emended to *nap-pa-<ši>-šú* or *ap!-pi!-šú*.

- IV 19. *šikin išātim* also occurs in Boissier, *DA* 211 14; *STT* I 38 117; *Iṣi* I 192 apud *CAD* sub voce *išātu*; but the meaning is hardly clear.
- IV 25. *mēšu* does not seem to occur otherwise in the II/I, but its meaning in the I/I suits this context very well. This passage confirms the impression given by *YBT* VII 61 4–6 (*nīš(mu) anim u ṣamaš ina ge-eš-ḫu-ru . . . ú-še-el-li*) that in this period a person stood in a magic circle to take an oath by a god.
- V 5. *udu.nitá.niga.sig<sub>5</sub>* seems to occur only here, though *udu.nitá* and *udu.niga.sig<sub>5</sub>* are well known.
- V 9. The first word is shown by the parallels in the royal inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II to be a phonetic writing of *ṣiṣpēš.ḫád.a* “dried fig”. In *Harra* XXIV (line 235 according to the provisional line numbering, kindly communicated by Miss E. Reiner) offers *Ú.KIT-tum* as the Akkadian of *ṣiṣpēš.ḫád.a*. This can only be reconciled with the traces on our tablet by emending the third sign to *-lil-* and restoring: *ṣ[a-a]m-lil-tum*, which is altogether too bold a step.
- V 10. The surviving slight trace of the first word favours [*in-b*]*i*, but we have preferred *lalū* in view of the parallels in the royal inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II (*VAB* IV 154 41 and 160 11). Also the occurrence of *inbi kirī* above (line 7) is against a repetition of the word.
- V 15. *ultamlil* is taken as III/I perfect of *mll* “eat” (*BWL* p. 307, note on 185).
- V 19. The last signs could be read *ṣ[ma]rduke*, but this leaves the *a* in the air.
- V 22. If the upright wedge after *a* can be considered part of an erasure then the line could be restored: [*TA m*]ar-ḫa-ši a-d[*i* . . .

#### Appendix on the Reading of *ṣid*

In the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* sub voce *id* it is maintained: “the logogram *ṣid*, because it is constructed as masc., is to be read *id* rather than *nāru*, which is fem.” However, in an Old Babylonian personal name *na-ru-um-il* (“The-river-is-a-god”) the reading is *nārum* not *id* (see *CT* 4 50, Bu 88-5-12, 731 8). Similarly in an Akkadian text from Ras Shamra (*BWL* 116 3) *id-me-e a-na na-ri* certainly refers to the god of the river ordeal as *nāru*, not *id*. In a *tamitu*-text from the libraries of Ashurbanipal (K 4721 obv. 2, unpublished) there is reference to [*annanna ap*]il *annanna šá ina ṣna-rum a-mat*-[ . . . Clearly the glosses in the Middle Assyrian laws (*i-id*) do not prove that for every occasion *ṣid* is to be read *id* not *nārum*. In the present text the interchange of *id* and *ṣid* in column IV strongly supports a reading *nāru*.